Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend Claims 1 and 5. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Claim Listing:

1. (Currently amended) A method for processing network layer messages within a wireless communication system, the network layer including within it certain functional layers, including a radio resource function, a mobility management function, and a connection management function with at least the radio resource function being normally assumed to be a transport mechanism for the mobility management and connection management functions, the method comprising the steps of:

examining a network layer message to determine, prior to routing it to any functional layer, whether it is associated with connection management, mobility management, or radio resource management; and

routing the message directly to the respective connection management, mobility management, or radio resource management functional layer, ~~directly and~~ without passing the message ~~between~~ through each of the functional layers.

2. (Original) A method as in claim 1 wherein the steps of examining and routing the message are performed within a network layer thread as the message is first received by the network layer.

3. (Original) A method as in claim 1 wherein the steps of examining and routing the message are performed within a lower layer layer thread as the message is passed up to the network layer by the lower layer.

4. (Original) A method as in claim 1 wherein the step of examining only processes messages traveling in an uplink direction from a mobile station towards network subsystem components.

5. (Currently amended) A method as in claim 4 additionally comprising the step of:

for messages traveling in a downlink direction from network subsystem components towards the mobile station;

processing downlink network layer messages in a direct manner such that the network layer messages do not ~~step~~ pass through other layer protocol stacks.

6. (Original) A method as in claim 5 additionally comprising the step of directly routing network layer messages that do not require acknowledgment.

7. (Original) A method as in claim 5 wherein downlink network layer messages that comprise connection management messages are first routed to the mobility management function.

8. (Original) A method as in claim 3 wherein network layer messages that comprise mobility management messages are first routed to the radio resource function.

9. (Original) A method as in claim 1 wherein the steps of examining a network layer message and routing the message directly to the respective functional layer are performed in a subsystem incorporating Base Transceiver System (BTS), Base Station Controller (BSC), and Mobile Switching Center Subsystems (MSC).

10. (Original) A method as in claim 1 wherein the steps of examining the network layer message and routing the message directly to the respective functional layer are performed in a mobile station (MS).